

We claim:

1. A method to improve the threshold voltage (V_t) roll-off in an NMOS transistor that includes a shallow trench isolation feature, comprising:

(a) providing a substrate having an active area where an NMOS transistor will be built;

(b) forming trenches in said substrate wherein the shallow trenches separate active areas in said substrate;

(c) forming a liner on the surface of said substrate and on the sidewalls and bottom of said shallow trenches;

(d) forming a plug in said shallow trenches; said plug is recessed below the top of said substrate;

(e) performing an angled indium implant through said shallow trenches into the substrate adjacent to top corners of the trenches;

(f) removing said plug and depositing an insulator layer to fill said shallow trenches;

(g) planarizing said insulator layer; and

(h) forming a gate dielectric layer on said substrate and forming a patterned gate layer over said gate dielectric layer and over said insulator layer.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said shallow trenches are formed by depositing a pad oxide on said substrate, depositing a cap layer on said pad oxide, patterning a photoresist on said cap layer and transferring trench openings in said photoresist into said substrate with a plasma etch process.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein said cap layer is silicon nitride.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein said shallow trenches have a width in the range of less than 100 nm to several microns and a depth into said substrate between about 1500 and 5000 Angstroms and wherein said active areas have a width that ranges from less than 100 nm to several microns.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said liner is a layer of thermal oxide having a thickness from about 30 to 500 Angstroms.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said plug is formed by coating a photoresist or polymer layer on said substrate and then etching back said photoresist or polymer layer.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the top of said recessed plug is a distance about 300 to 1700 Angstroms below the top of said substrate.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said angled indium implant is performed with an energy between about 10 and 300 keV at an angle of about 0° to 60° and with a dose in the range of about $1e12$ to $5e13$ ions/cm².

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said implant forms doped regions in said substrate adjacent to said shallow trenches having a thickness between about 30 and 1000 Angstroms and with an indium concentration from about 10^{14} to 10^{19} ions/cm³.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein said implant forms a doped region in said substrate that extends away from a shallow trench by a distance of 0 to about 1000 Angstroms.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein the insulator layer is comprised of SiO₂ or a low k dielectric material.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said gate dielectric layer is comprised of SiO₂ or is comprised of an upper high k dielectric metal oxide layer on a lower interfacial layer.

13. The method of claim 2 further comprised of removing said pad oxide and cap layers prior to formation of said gate dielectric layer.

14. A method to improve the threshold voltage (V_t) roll-off in an NMOS transistor by fabricating a shallow trench isolation structure, comprising:

(a) providing a substrate having an active area where an NMOS transistor will be built;

(b) forming shallow trenches in said substrate; said shallow trenches separate active areas in said substrate;

(c) growing an oxide liner layer on the sidewalls and bottom of said shallow trenches;

(d) forming a plug in said shallow trenches wherein said plug is recessed below the top of said substrate;

(e) performing an angled indium implant through said trench openings into the substrate adjacent to top corners of the shallow trenches;

(f) removing said plug layer; and

(g) depositing an insulator layer in said shallow trenches and planarizing said insulator layer.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said shallow trenches are formed by depositing a pad oxide on said substrate and a silicon nitride cap layer on said pad oxide followed by patterning a photoresist on said nitride layer and transferring openings in said patterned photoresist into said substrate with a plasma etch process.

16. The method of claim **15** further comprised of removing said pad oxide and nitride layers following said planarization step, depositing a gate dielectric layer on said active areas and patterning a gate layer on said gate dielectric layer.

17. The method of claim **14** wherein said shallow trenches have a width in the range of less than 100 nm to several microns and a depth into said substrate between about 1500 and 5000 Angstroms.

18. The method of claim **14** wherein said oxide liner has a thickness from about 30 to 500 Angstroms.

19. The method of claim **14** wherein said recessed plug is formed by coating a photoresist or polymer layer on said substrate and then etching back said photoresist or polymer layer.

20. The method of claim **14** wherein the top of said recessed plug is a distance about 300 to 1700 Angstroms below the top of said substrate.

21. The method of claim **14** wherein said angled indium implant is performed with an energy between about 10 and 300 keV at an angle of 0° to about 60° and with a dose in the range of about $1e12$ to $5e13$ ions/cm².

22. The method of claim **21** wherein said implant forms doped regions in said substrate adjacent to said shallow trenches; said doped regions have a thickness between about 30 and 1000 Angstroms and with an indium concentration from about 10^{14} to 10^{19} ions/cm³.

23. The method of claim **21** wherein said implant forms a doped region in said substrate that extends away from a shallow trench by a distance of 0 to about 1000 Angstroms.

24. The method of claim **14** wherein the insulator layer is comprised of SiO_2 or a low k dielectric material.

25. The method of claim **14** further comprised of performing an anneal step to activate the dopant in implanted regions of said substrate.

26. An NMOS transistor having an improved narrow width V_t roll-off, comprising:

(a) a substrate that includes shallow trench isolation (STI) features which are comprised of a shallow trench with sloped sidewalls and a bottom, an oxide liner formed on said shallow trench sidewalls and bottom, and an insulator layer formed on said oxide liner that fills said shallow trench and extends to a level that is above the top of said substrate;

(b) an active area formed between two adjacent shallow trenches in said substrate; said active area having an indium doped region that is adjacent to top corners of said shallow trenches;

(c) a gate dielectric layer formed on said active areas; and

(d) a patterned gate layer formed on said gate dielectric layer wherein said gate layer extends over said adjacent shallow trenches.

27. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein said substrate is also comprised of a second p-type dopant in said active areas;

28. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein the depth of said shallow trench is about 1500 to 5000 Angstroms and the width of the shallow trench ranges from less than 100 nm to several microns.

29. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein said oxide liner has a thickness of about 50 to 300 Angstroms.

30. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein said insulator layer is comprised of SiO₂ or a low k dielectric material.

31. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein said doped indium region has an indium concentration from about 10¹⁴ to 10¹⁹ ions/cm³ and has a thickness in the range of about 30 to 1000 Angstroms.

32. The NMOS transistor structure of claim **26** wherein said indium doped region extends away from said shallow trench to a distance between 0 and about 1000 Angstroms.

33. The structure of claim **26** wherein said gate dielectric layer is comprised of SiO₂ or an upper high k dielectric metal oxide layer on a lower interfacial layer.

34. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein said gate layer has a thickness of about 300 to 5000 Angstroms and forms a conformal layer on said gate dielectric layer and on said adjacent STI features.

35. The structure of claim **26** wherein said gate layer is comprised of doped polysilicon.

36. The NMOS transistor of claim **26** wherein said gate layer is comprised of undoped polysilicon or amorphous silicon.